

1/30/22 - John 14:15-31 - "Keeping Christ's Word"

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[0 : 00] Let's remind ourselves of where we've been. Jesus is in his farewell discourse right now. Judas has departed from him right after Jesus washed all the disciples' feet.

Judas has departed. He was dismissed from the presence of the disciples to betray Jesus. So that kind of just sparked out this timeline where the clock is ticking.

Jesus is hours away from being captured and he is a day away from his death. And John stretches this out. He slows down his gospel writing to hone in on a lot of details.

And we're gonna be looking at those today. And so looking back, we just went through a bunch of questions last week. If you were with us on the live stream, that would have helped.

It was pretty bad weather. And so we didn't have a lot of people. But last week, the disciples were asking a lot of good questions. Good questions that the church even today is asking, whether we like to admit it or not.

[1 : 11] And so Jesus was addressing various questions that the disciples had regarding his plan and his mission, his departure. And so he continues in that of talking about and segueing from the greater works of which the disciples will be seeing through on this earth.

And right now, Jesus starts in verse 15, speaking about a helper. And we're gonna be picking up into two different sections, a message titled Keeping Christ's Word today.

And we are going to look at this, hopefully in completion of the entire passage. If not, I have a timer today for sure to make sure that we're not missing our Bob Evans lunches.

So let's turn to prayer. And we're gonna dive right into the text and not waste any time.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. And at this time, we know that this is no ordinary time of just reading any other book or any other literature or any discourse.

[2 : 31] This is divinely inspired words. And so Father, we come to you looking to your word to give us guidance in life. Father, to confirm or deny our following of you.

Father, help us by the power of your dwelling Holy Spirit in our lives, in our midst right now. We pray this at this time. Help us. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. The first section that we're gonna be looking at today, thank you. The first section we're gonna be looking at today is the reality. We're gonna be looking at a reality and the effects.

Reality, effects today. Think about that. Reality, effects. Reality, effects. Okay. So first section is the reality. God gave us a helper.

Verse 15, it says, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. Jesus details the uniqueness, the love, uniqueness of love expressed from the church, the disciples and the church at large by keeping his word.

[3 : 42] And boy, looking at the landscape of the world today, this is something that the church needs. This is a time, a place. It's always been a time and a place.

It's not saying that this time is unique from another time, but it's a constant reminder to us that we need today in our ever-changing secular appropriations of morality, the changing winds of the culture, or even identity of anthropology, of what makes a human a human, and all of that that's been detailed in Scripture.

And the reality of this daunting task of humanity since the Garden of Eden is that we are prone to fail miserably on our own strength.

If it was left to us to make a good decision, we're going to fail miserably in our own strength. And thus, Jesus requests from the Father in verse 16 for another helper.

This helper is no ordinary helper. This is a person. This is a person who acts as a spokesman or a representative of someone else's cause.

[5 : 08] It's especially a reference to in front of a judge in the court of law. This is an intercessor, an advocate, we'll say.

And so, in verse 16, the helper is an everlasting presence for the church, number one. Number two, this helper is the spirit of truth.

The attribute of this helper is truth. This helper is a person. It is not a feeling. It is not a force.

I won't insert a Star Wars reference, too many of those in the past month. But it is a person who, verse 17 at the end, who dwells in you.

And most of all, he was uniquely gifted to the church, specific target people, to the church, not to the world.

[6 : 16] At the moment of the church's repentance from sin and turning from sin and coming to faith in Jesus Christ, the long-forward, ever-abiding presence of Jesus Christ, in life, in the life of the disciples, is similar to the ever-abiding presence of God's spirit in the believer, meaning you and me, if you are in Christ this morning.

Let's take a pause for a moment, and this is what I'm talking about. We need to think about this for a moment. Think about what's being said here.

God's dwelling with his people. God's consolation for his people. God's commands to his people.

It doesn't take a biblical scholar to see that what is unfolding here is continuity within the desire of God to be with his people.

That stems way back to the Garden of Eden. We see this just as God dwelled with his people in Exodus and Leviticus through the tabernacle and also through the temple in 1 Kings.

[7 : 47] And even stretching to, if we want to go to the end of the book, we know how the book ends. We have the book right here. That's a good thing. And so Revelation 21, we see that there's not going to be, the temple, the physical temple is going to be gone.

That's a time when God's people will dwell with God just as it was in the beginning. And so just as God's desire to dwell with his people then, Jesus Christ makes a way for God to uniquely dwell with his people today, just as we see throughout redemptive history.

Secondly, we see the consolation of God towards his people, don't we? This is like the words from Moses to the people of Israel, where he says in Deuteronomy, at the end of Deuteronomy, the Lord will never leave you nor forsake you.

And just as God provided consolation for Israel then, Jesus Christ envisions the same reality in verse 18, I will not leave you as orphans.

And then lastly, considering the importance of obedience to the law, we see all throughout these pages, it is all about the commandments given from Mount Sinai and the various refraining from Theophanies throughout the angel of the Lord appearing to people and reminding them of their disobedience and to be obedient and not do the thing, but they do the thing.

[9 : 22] And it's constant. Round and round we go throughout these pages. And now here, just as God commands his people to keep his commandments, so too Jesus instructs the church to keep his commandments.

Old covenant was keeping the law, new covenant is keeping his commandments. But wait, there's something even more profound of what is unfolding right now in redemptive history.

It's like the infomercial, but wait, there's more. I know I say it a lot, but it goes through my head a lot, so you have to deal with it. A certain dwelling is unfolding here.

This is not simply at arm's length something that walks into the room. This isn't just something that is here and gone.

This is part of progressive revelation of God's redemptive plan. His plan is not simply and merely dwelling with us.

[10 : 31] His plan is to dwell within us. We now become the temple of God.

I didn't know how this would unfold at this moment, but if you're not in Christ today, I don't know what else can persuade you to come to faith in Jesus Christ.

To see the desire from our heavenly Father has been constant throughout these pages. We just need to look and to see it.

We can look around the world and have our doubts, and if God is hearing us or if he's forsaken us, God has spoken, and he's been revealing his desire to be with us, and he used Jesus Christ as a means to do so.

And the great measures that he's gone to accomplish that, to speak this hope to you today, what is holding you back from loving God today?

[11 : 44] From turning from your sin and coming into a relationship with him. Do it. But this monologue all of a sudden turns into this dialogue in verse 22.

We see a question arise from Judas, and John makes sure that we don't mix up what's been going on in here, he says, as Judas, not Iscariot for our own benefit.

And so the interruption says basically, essentially, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, but not to the world? Right? That's the essence of the question.

And so Jesus highlights two things, and the third thing that he highlights is not so obvious, but we're going to look at it. The first thing he, Jesus does, is he reiterates the previous seven verses in verse 23.

He says, essentially, if you love me, you'll keep my commandments, and he mentions that this dwelling, he even hones it into the Trinitarian, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, using plural, words of plurality, saying, we will dwell with you.

[13 : 02] And he's saying, essentially, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all in authority will be given and will be dwelling in you as your guide. And so in verse 24, the condition of the world is not a recipient of that.

He goes in to explain what has been said all throughout John's gospel. The light has come into darkness, but darkness doesn't want the light.

They love the darkness, right? And so the world hates Jesus Christ. The world doesn't receive his word.

They reject his word. But one not so obvious takeaway with this is that the implications of what Jesus says to Judas, not Iscariot, is that it is not Jesus Christ's mission to personally manifest himself to the unbelieving world, but it is the role of the church in order to manifest Jesus to the unbelieving world.

In the most unreverent remarks, essentially Jesus is dropping a hemi into our rusty, deteriorating frames that were, you know, from when I started this message, I'm closer to death.

[14 : 27] I'm not healthier. And we're all on this process of decay. Jesus has dropped the hemi into us decaying frames in order to do his work.

And so it is this conversation that seems to really hit Judas at this point. He's also known as the brother of James, the author of Jude.

And if you look, even in his writings, this time, Jesus teaching him is so profound, had profound effects, that all throughout his letter, it is about defending Jesus Christ's word to protecting us from false teaching, from keeping and preserving.

And it's so interesting to see how this had its effects just a couple decades later. And it is a triune mission of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to empower the church to manifest the good news to those around.

And so the devotion of God towards humanity is demonstrated by his love through the cross. And the devotion of humanity is similarly, on the other side, demonstrated by our love through our obedience.

[15 : 47] So we have to ask at this time, how is your love for God revealed in your life? How is your love for God revealed in your life?

And to maybe just, maybe sharpen it a little bit, a little bit here, does your devotion proclaim love, or does your devotion to God proclaim hatred to God?

Now this is a reflective aspect of the text that I grappled with. I am preaching to myself. I may be a couple steps up here physically, but I am not any.

We're at the foot of the cross, it's level ground. We are all working at this together in various capacities. capacities. And so, I gotta ask husbands, fellow husbands, Jesus has called you, if you're keeping his word, Jesus has called you to love your wives as Jesus Christ loved the church.

To be washing her in the word, husbands. wives. Jesus has called your devotion to your husband to reflect your devotion to Jesus Christ as the head.

[17 : 23] This is demonstrated in submissiveness. This is demonstrated in honor. This is demonstrated in respect. Not getting together with your girls and complaining about, oh, my husband does this and he does this, you know, but honoring just as the crown of your husband.

Are the marriages in our church word-keeping marriages? Right? This applies to 47% of Steel Valley Church of married couples.

people who are single. Thinking of word-keeping, Jesus has called you, men and women, single men and women, to emulate love, to emulate joy, to emulate peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Don't make me break out in the song my kids sing. To put away the fruits of the flesh, to put on the fruits of the spirit.

This applies to 23% of Steel Valley Church. How does the world experience you as a word-keeper?

[18 : 49] What does your measure of love and joy and peace say about your love for Jesus Christ? What is the measure of your patience and kindness and goodness say about your love for Christ?

How about faithfulness? How about gentleness? Self-control? Say about your love for Jesus Christ. How would the world experience you as a word-keeper?

Children, you're not getting out of this one. Children, Jesus has called you to respect and obey your parents. Children, who are under your parents' authority.

Not to undermine them, not to usurp them, to think that you're doing better than them. I'll be downstairs in just a moment. I'll go tell them for you guys. I'll send them the cliff notes. not to undermine them, not to rebel against them, but to honor and respect your parents.

This is 30% of our church that this applies to. Would your parents, any young adults or kids under your parents' roof, would your parents say that you are a word-keeper?

[20 : 11] You see, our level of commitment to God will extend only as far as we are convicted by the Holy Spirit to do so.

If the Holy Spirit convicts and we fail to act, we reveal love for self, not love for God. And the reason why I sit on this and hone this in so real for us today, even drawing out the percentages, is because our love for Jesus Christ is dictated upon how we are keeping his word.

If you are a Christian, that means your life is going to look different. Yeah, we're going to mess up a lot. This talks about the problem of humanity.

we mess up a lot, but we don't continue in the sludge that we make, the mess that we create. It's an ongoing process of renewal, and progress is made for those who desire to grow in godliness.

And guess what? Desire to grow in godliness is by our awareness of our need for a helper. We need help, and so Jesus has sent them.

[21 : 34] And I pray that the great extent of God's desire to dwell in you, Church, Steel Valley Church, will ignite your desire to allow him to work through you in mighty ways.

The second section that we're getting into is looking at the effects, the effects of keeping his word, that God's help guides us.

Prior to this section, getting to verse 25, Jesus revealed the hopeful, persevering reality when the helper comes.

However, Jesus shifts his focus from the reality of keeping his word to the effects of keeping his word. What this means in our lives and how we can be expected to experience this.

Verse 25 says, these things I have spoken to you, meaning the words, the commandments that Jesus has uttered from his lips regarding the weighty reality of his words that bring us great comfort amid uncertainty as we saw last week, and all the while, Jesus is still with them.

[23 : 02] But as Jesus Christ's presence with the disciples will soon be changing, they know that there is danger up ahead. They don't know when it's going to come.

And so there's this looming tension behind this monologue and quick dialogue here. And he makes another triune emphasis regarding this helper, that the Holy Spirit sent by the Father in Jesus' name in verse 26.

And the effect that this will have upon a believer's life is a lifestyle of teaching and reminding us of God's word, of the words of Jesus Christ.

And so in verse 26 we see he expands on that. He says that the Holy Spirit will teach us. The Holy Spirit will bring remembrance to all that I have said to you.

Don't we live in a world of fact-checking right now? I mean I gotta beg to differ. Like who's fact-checking the fact-checkers? That's what I want to know.

[24 : 15] But I digress. Anyhow. We live in a world of fact-checking. Everything is fact-checked by some standard or measuring stick of somebody's opinion essentially of what would be truth and false.

And so the effects of Jesus departing from the disciples ended this corporate discipleship. And the effects of the Holy Spirit imparting to the disciples began a personal form of discipleship that began and was fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2.

And so today we live in a culture of like new and fresh ways and it's kind of like society look throughout history. We don't have to think that we have any better ideas in life.

It's all kind of been done. It's just repackaged like old new stuff. We always think that we have a new way, a new fresh thing. Like let's redo and strip the system, deconstruct everything and just build it up the way we want to.

Well, I gotta tell you that's been done before and it doesn't end well. A passage like this reminds us, living in a culture of new and fresh ways, that the Holy Spirit that dwells within us will find agreement in what the Bible has revealed to us, which has been, guess what?

[25 : 49] Inspired by the Holy Spirit. So what we're saying is the thing that is being imparted to us will find agreement to the Word of God of which it inspired.

There's continuity between that. It's the spirit of truth. So how do we test ourselves of what may be revealed to us? We test it according to the agreement of the inspired Word of God.

And so the call of Israel has always been to remember, right? Remember, you know, what God has done for them in the wilderness, the provision that God has done, the feasts and the festivals that have taken place to remember because they were surrounded by idols.

They were surrounded by the new and fresh ways to carve this image and receive that child you've been wanting and longing for. This is the culture of the Canaanites that was surrounding them.

And so these apostles uniquely were fulfilled in this revelation through preaching and the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. And God used that to give us that inspired guide.

[27 : 04] And these promises continue their fulfillment as the church learns from Scriptures, which are inspired by God through the Holy Spirit.

And this is sufficient to equip us with everything, for every good work, 2 Timothy 3.16. The only thing that changes with God's truth is the heart of which it checks, our hearts.

And how quickly we forget the very basis of our love. As Jesus has defined, right? If you love me, in verse 15, you will keep my word, my commandments.

The Holy Spirit is the beacon of truth of that which was said. And by our keeping that which was said increases the depth of that which we know.

We know the true and living God by the inspired word of God in the Scriptures. We look no further. So allowing the word of God to increase in and through our lives is the fullest extent of declaring God, our love for God, and our maturity in our faith, rooting ourselves in the word.

[28 : 21] And not only is the Holy Spirit the barrier of truth, in verse 27 we see that he's also the bearer of peace to our troubled conditions.

This is a fulfillment that the Holy Spirit provides for us known as shalom throughout the nation of Israel. Found in fulfillment through Christ's redemption.

And in verse 28, if the effects of the Holy Spirit within our lives will only be made possible through the departing of Jesus Christ, then these disciples are going to be shocked at what lay waiting ahead.

Because he said, you would have had rejoice because I am going to the Father. The Father is greater than I. Not only is the Holy Spirit the source of truth, it's the source of joy, it's the source of rejoicing, it's the source of all of our joy.

It provides everything that we need because we need help. As we wrap up our time today, we are running out of time. God is calling us to a word-centered and spirit-filled life.

[29 : 33] And depending on your experiences in life, that might appear as a contradiction. And it was never intended to be so. To be people of the word is to be people of the spirits.

To be people of the spirit is to be people of the word. I don't know what happened along the lines where we've detached the two from what the Bible clearly says. And so, it's important to make, not make the error of detaching the two.

And so, let's stand back for a moment. I will be closing in a little bit, but keep your ears open. Thinking of the questions that the disciples asked just previously, in chapter, well, stepping back to chapter 13 with Peter, with his emotional response.

Where you go, I'll go. Where you stay, I'll say. It's like Ruth saying to Naomi, I'm following you, right? And then going to Thomas saying, well, how will we know the way? I need to chart the course.

I don't know how to follow. Where are you going? And then we go to Philip, who's like, who's basically been thinking about Star Wars, for lack of a better phrase.

[30 : 53] And he has been, well, show us the Father and that'll be enough. Show us. Prove to us. Right? All these questions that are tied in as literal, literary context with the passage today.

It's the uncertainty that surrounds our lives and causes us to become emotional wrecks. It causes us to feel lost at times.

It causes us to have unbelief in God. Where we're like, show us. And it's like, well, I already did multiple times read your Bible. Right?

And it's constant in our lives. And he sent us a helper. How many of us, though, suffer from a limited perspective upon holding onto things in this life that often are perceived as bringing us comfort?

Where we mistakenly replace the Holy Spirit in our lives and the role that it was intended to have within our lives.

[31 : 58] And now, the temptation can stretch widely and we could talk about all the things in this world that we kind of just replace. I'm not talking about materialistic things right now because Jesus isn't.

But what he is talking about, the immediate context of this passage today is centered upon the word of Christ. And it is here where I think it's best that we spend a moment of our time as we come to a close.

And let me explain why. Because this is a problem within the church. Being a believer, having the Holy Spirit, you know, that's a pretty big deal.

Right? And we live in a day and age where we might be prone to baptizing our emotions. We might be prone to baptizing the dreams that we have.

We might be prone to baptizing our feelings and intuition that we might have of, well, something's been placed on my heart and, well, it's been placed on my heart.

[33 : 09] I have the Holy Spirit. I've been doing this a long time, so it's pretty much infallible. Right? Wrong. This isn't saying that it's necessarily bad to ask God to place things on your heart.

I hope God is placing things on your heart. But I would call that more wisdom from what the scripture has been teaching and applying in your life, of which our hearts must be tested.

Our hearts are deceitful above all things. And this is important because even as a Christian, we need to realize we need continual help and guidance, especially through the inspired word of God.

So committing such an error abandons our love for Jesus Christ when all of a sudden our feelings, our emotions, our dreams, our intuitions become inspired then.

It abandons love for Jesus Christ. This is not keeping his commandments. And we are not keeping his word. We are not remembering his commands. We are not learning from God any longer.

[34 : 15] And in turn, we become little gods in this life. And it's dangerous. More cults have begun and been formed by baptizing the whispers of Satan.

Did God really say this? Well, here's a new way. Here's a dream. And build an entire denomination and lead a bunch of people astray from the word of God that is complete and sufficient for every good work.

This is what happens when we toss the Holy Spirit in the trunk and abandon the word of Christ and sever ourselves from any truth. Isn't it interesting how we're in a gospel narrative?

There's different genres within the Bible. When you jump into a couple different epistles and they're letters to the church and that are bringing instructions to what God is doing, the greater works of salvation, of spreading the good news of the gospel, isn't it interesting, church, that when we look at the words and we kind of chart these out, it is centered upon defending.

It's centered upon holding the ground, protecting the foundation. The foundation has been laid. And the church is to be building upon that foundation, not trying to recreate or expand that foundation.

[35 : 39] The foundation is laid by the apostles and prophets of which Jesus is the cornerstone. We should find great purpose in verse 29.

Look with me. Hopefully you have your Bibles open. It says in verse 29, I have told you before it takes place. I have told you before it takes place.

One more time. I have told you. My words have escaped from my mouth to go inside your ears. For what? So that when it does take place, you may believe.

This is the theme within the gospel of John. It's belief, believing, belief, and believe in me has been repeated 97 times in the entire gospel of John.

And Jesus Christ is still in the business of confirming the power of abiding in his word to prove to us in order that we may believe.

[36 : 48] Testing all things according to his word. It's the confirming power of the spirit that propels our ongoing faith in Jesus Christ.

And this is symptomatic in emphasis. This is starting with, if you love Jesus Christ, you'll keep his commandments. If you keep his commandments, you will continue in faith.

It will validate your faith. Each one of those components validates each other. Lord, when you read in Matthew, we've done all these things in your name.

And Jesus responds to these people that have done things that felt that they may have been following Jesus Christ. They felt like they were saved. They looked like a Christian. They talked like a Christian. They walked like a Christian. But when it came down to, do they actually know who Jesus is?

He says, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. If lawlessness is part of the situation of their rejection of Jesus Christ, it's because they did not keep his word.

[37 : 56] And so we know by the reality and the weight of what we're talking about here, we're talking about life and death. We're talking about heaven or hell, eternal life or eternal judgment.

This is real, church. And I hope that it doesn't take a deathbed to actually kick us in the butt and get us in gear. I hope that we can be encouraged at this time.

Because hell, if you want to talk about it, it's going to be filled with people who felt that they knew God. It's going to be filled with it. Of people that he says, depart from me, I never knew you.

You never kept my word. You based your faith off a feeling, a little tingly sensation in your back. It's nothing according to the inspired word of God, which the Holy Spirit confirms.

You don't need an emotion. You don't need, if you need an emotion, you need to have repentance. It should bring a contrite spirit. I don't want to detach, I don't want you to think that I'm some dogmatic pastor.

[39 : 01] I'm not the least bit. But you don't need a specific emotion. You don't need a dream. You don't need this intuition. You need a Bible. And many churches, some leaders need a Bible and a good commentary to help them as well.

It is telling how Jesus Christ ends this pericope, this section of the narrative. He kind of closes it with a symbolic reminder of the urgency of this night.

The looming danger that's just hours away. Look in verse 30 and we'll close our time. I will no longer talk much with you.

For the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me. In other words, time is limited. And Jesus Christ says, the church must rise and go.

And this call is similar to the church today. To rise and go in faith. And if in faith, keeping the word of Jesus Christ.

[40 : 09] And if keeping the word of Jesus Christ, loving him. Let's pray.